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NSC BRIEFING

13 May 1954

INDOCHINA MILITARY

I. Generally accepted fact war Indochina
will be won, lost in Tonkin delta.

A. Militarily, control means hold
on most densely populated
(7,000,000) area.

1. Contains second best
seaport Indochina,
four of six major
airfields.

B. Economically, Viet Minh capture
would give it light industrial
facilities far beyond what it
now has.

1. Also, delta normally
produces about 2,000,000
tons rice annually. *THIS*

*NEARLY ENOUGH TO SUPPORT DELTA POPULATION
AND LOOKS LIKE PRIZE TO HUNGON VIET MINH*

OGA DIA reviews completed

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C. Psychologically, it traditional
center nationalism in Vietnam
and loss would be heavy blow
anti-Communist morale rest
Vietnam.

II.

III.

vanguard

enemy's battle force will reach
Tonkin delta 26 May, ready for
combat.

A. Force would amount to nine
battalions, to be followed
by remainder, 19 more
battalions.

IV.

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according to French figures, over 40
REGULAR
^ battalions could be concentrated
delta. In addition, there are
reserves of regional forces now north
of delta in training.

A.

B.

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control delta

airfields key to struggle; if
airfields lost, Hanoi will
become another Dien Bien Phu.

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C. Enemy movement from Dien Bien
Phu not yet discerned but air
observation shows it ~~abandoned~~ *evacuated*
its AA emplacements.

V. Viet Minh now has 37mm AA guns pro-
tecting supply route from Caobang
southward to delta, according French.

A. This underlines report last
week that enemy improving
supply network from China
border to delta.

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VII. In Cambodia, invasion early April by two regular Viet Minh battalions upset delicate military balance Cambodia.

(5 Bns)

- A. Shift of Cambodian units (meet threat northeast) exposed south, central portions country to increased enemy harassment.
- B. O'Daniel, after 10-11 May visit Phnom Penh, commented on defensive-mindedness of Cambodians (due French advice) and failure Cambodians react to Viet Minh incursion as invaded nation should.

- C. O'Daniel believes Cambodians must form three light divisions by November, otherwise country will be under heavy Viet Minh invasion.

Cam. 11 Bns

+ 2 Lt Bns

7 Lt Union - 1 Bn

[3 of 11 Cam Bns are under Fr control]

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VIII. Laniel, apparently reversing past French strategy, this week told Dillon in Paris that French might be forced withdraw completely from Laos and Cambodia to protect key areas Vietnam.

Laos 14 Bns
+
6 R Bns

A. Such withdrawal from Laos would deliver that country to the Viet Minh in short order.

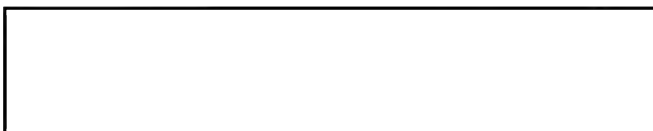
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B. Cambodia could be expected
oppose Viet Minh in the
hope of US technical aid.
But any Viet Minh intervention
in division strength would
bring about quick collapse.

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Viet

have in China sphere
[Cuba area]
of influence - Laos
Cambodia in India's

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